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THE SPEECH
of the Honourable

S^r. WILLIAM
BERKELEY

Governour and Capt : Generall of
Virginea, to the *Burgesses* in the *Grand*
Assembly at *James Towne* on the
17. of *March* 1651.

TOGETHER WITH A
DECLARATION

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Of the whole Country, occasioned upon the
sight of a printed paper from England,
Intituled An Act. &c.

- H A G H,

Printed By Samuell Broun *English*
Bookeseller. 1651.

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SIR WILLIAM

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Governor and Chief of the

Island of Jamaica in the

Year 1707.

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Right of a printed paper from England.

Printed at A. B. C.

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Gouvernour and Capt: Generall of
Virginea, to the *Burgesses* in the *Grand*
Assembly at *James Towne* on the 17. of
March 165^o.

Together with a Declaration of the whole
Country, occasioned upon the sight of a printed pa-
per from England, Intituled An Act. &c.

G Entlemen you perceave by the DECLARA-
TION that the men of *Westminster* have set out,
which I beleave you have all seene, how they
meane to deale with you hereafter, who in the
me of their wooing and courting you propound such hard
Conditions to be performed on your parts, & on their owne
nothing but a benigne acceptance of your duties to them.
Indeed me thinks they might have proposed something to
which might have streightned us to beare those heavy
gaines they are making ready for us, though it were but

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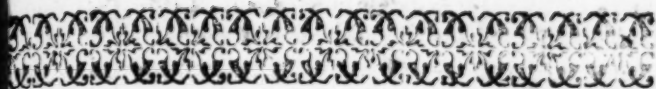
an assurance that we shall eat the bread for which our owne Oxen plow, and with our owne sweate we reape; but this assurance (it seemes) were a franchise beyond the Condition they have *resolu'd on the Question* we ought to be in: For the reason why they talke so *Magisterially* to us is this, we are forsooth their worships slaves, bought with their money and by consequence ought not to buy, or sell but with those they shall Authorize with a few trifles to Colzen us of all for which we toile and labour. If the whole Current of their reasoning were not as ridiculous, as their actions have been Tyrannicall and bloudy; we might wonder with what browes they could sustaine such impertinent assertions: For if you looke into it, the strength of their argument runs onely thus: we have laid violent hands on your Land-Lords possess'd his Manner house where you used to pay your rents, therefore now tender your respects to the same house you once revered: I call my Conscience to wimes, I lie not, I cannot in all their Declaration perceave a stronger argument for what they vvould impose on us, then this which I have now told you: They talke indeed of money laid out on this Country in its infancy: I vvill not say how little, nor how Centuply repaid, but will onely aske, was it theirs? They who in the beginning of this warr were so poore, & indigent, that the wealth and rapines of three Kingdomes & their Churches too, cannot yet make rich, but are faine to seeke out new Territories and impositions to sustaine their Luxury amongst themselves. Surely Gentlemen we are more slaves by nature then their power can make us if we suffer our selves to be shaken with these paper bulletts, & those on my life are the heaviest they either can or will send us. 'Tis true with us they have long threatned the Barbados, yet not a ship goes thither but to beg trade, nor will they do to

us, if we dare Honourably resist their Imperious Ordinance.
Assuredly Gentlemen you have heard under what heavy
burthens, the afflicted *English* Nation now groanes, and calls
to heaven for releife: how new and formerly unheard of im-
positions make the wives pray for barrennes and their hus-
bands deafnes to exclude the cryes of their succourles,
starving children: And I am confident you do believe, none
would long endure this slavery, if the sword at their throats
Did not Compell them to Languish under the misery
they howrely suffer. Looke on their sufferings with the
Eyes of understanding, and that will prevent all your teares
but those of Compassion. Consider with what prisons and
Axes they have paid those that have served them to the
hazard of their soules: Consider your selves how happy
you are and have been, how the Gates of wealth and Ho-
nour are shut on no man, and that there is not here an Ar-
bitrary hand that dares to touch the substance of either poore
or rich: But that which I would have you chiefly to con-
sider with thankfullnes is: That God hath seperated you
from the guilt of the crying blood of our Pious Souveraigne
of ever blessed memory. But mistake not Gentlemen part
of it will yet staine your garments if you willingly submit to
those murderers hands that shed it: Premble to thinke
how the oathes they will impose will make those guilty of
it, that have long abhor'd the traiterousnesse of the act.
But I confesse having had so frequent testimonies of your
truths and courages, I cannot have a reasonable suspicion
of any cowardly falling off from the former resolutions,
and have onely mentioned this last, as a part of my duty and
care of you, not of my call doubt, and feares: or if with
untried men we were to argue on this subject, what is it
can be hoped for in a change, which we have not allready?

Is it liberty? The sun looks not on a people more free then we are from all oppression. Is it wealth? Hundreds of examples shew us that Industry & Thrift in a short time may bring us to as high a degree of it, as the Country and our Conditions are yet capable of: Is it security to enjoy this wealth when gotten? With out blushing I will speake it, I am confident theare lives not that person can accuse me of attempting the least act against any mans property? Is it peace? The Indians God be blessed round about us are subdued; we can onely feare the Londoners, who wouldaine bring us to the same poverty, wherein the Dutch found and received us; would take away the liberty of our consciences, and tongues, and our right of giving and selling our goods to whom vve please. But Gentlemen by the Grace of God we will not so tamely part with our KING, and all these blessings we enjoy under him; and if they oppose us, do but follow me, I will either lead you to victory, or loose a life which I cannot more gloriously sacrifice then for my loyalty, and your security.

Vera Copia John Corker
Cler: Dom: Commons.

This speech being ended the pretended Act of Parliament was publicquely read in the Assembly where upon (at the motion of the House of Commons to the Governour and Council) this following vindication was unanimously agreed on.



WE The Governour Councell and
Burgesses of Virginea, have seene a printed pa-
 per bearing date at London the 3. of Octob. 1651.
 wherein (with other *Plantations of America*) we are pro-
 hibited trade and Commerce with all but such as the pre-
 sent power shall allow of : We likewise see our selves
 branded in it with the ignominious names of Rebels and
 Traitors, which we so much abhor, that we would detest
 our selves if we thought they were deservedly imposed on
 us : And shall take leave to thinke we are unworthily
 slandered, till stronger proofes then we yet find, are brought
 against us to convince our judgements and Consciences
 that we are guilty of those Horrid Crimes. Therefore
 though we professe that our judgments and industry, have
 been long solely and necessarily imployed in providing
 against the necessities of our poore families, and by Con-
 sequence should not presume that any Act or Transaction of
 ours could be worthy the publique view : Yet since the
 plainest vindication of innocencie is accepted, we shall
 intimate the reasons of ours, imploring charitable and abler
 judgments to perfect what we shall hint to them in our
 answeres, to the Aspersions we find Authorised against us.

And First whereas they say, *That the Plantations in Ame-*
rica were seized at the Cost and established by the Authority of some in
England, and therefore ought to be governed by the Lawes of England.

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We

We conceave we may safely confesse all this, and yet not run the Hazard of any misprision of guilt, nay we thinke, this only testimony of theirs were sufficient to cleere us from the Aspersions of Rebels, and Traitors, if we had no other markes of innocency left us : For we say, we were some of us sent, others permitted to come hither by the gracious favour of our Pious KINGS, sworne to govern and be governed (as farr as possible the place was Capable of) by the lawes of *England*; which lawes we have inviolably and sacredly kept as farr as our abilityes to execute and our Capacities to judge would permit us, and with reason; for these lawes onely in such times of tumults, stormes, and tempests, can humanely prevent our ruine. These lawes often enjoyned us the Oathes of Allegiance and Supremacy, and they tell us, that no power on earth can abioive or manumit us from our obedience to our PRINCE, and his lawfull Successors : These lawes tell us that when we have don all vve can to auoyd it, we may resist violence with force, and in a lawfull defence of ourselves, destroy any that shall endeavour to take away our lives or substance : These lawes vve profess are our guides and do beleeve vve deserve punishment and infamy if we vwillingly, or vwillfully deviate from them.

Secondly suppose vve vvere such slaves by nature as to be awed vvith the iron rods held over us, in what hands soever found; would not then themselves thinke vve deserved the worst usage could be inflicted on us. For what assurance could vve give of our new Loyalty, after having so childishly, and impiously, relinquisht our old Allegiance. Could vve reasonably repine to pay vvith our ovvne sweat and bloud, those Garrisons which must be kept among as, to

fix such volatile obedience as ours would appeare to be?
 For as the Question is stated to us, we ought to yeild to who-
 soever possesse themselves of *Westminster Hall*: Where we
 experimentally have found, the heads of divers factions and
 pretensions, have presided and excluded one the other; and
 we have no Oraculous assurance, but it may be so againe;
 therefore in a Condition so dubious and uncertaine, as ours
 would be (whercin no lesse then our soules are concern'd)
 we desire them to permit us simple men to take leave to
 follow the perspicuous and plaine pathes of God and our
 Lawes, & that they would be pleas'd to remember that good
 charitable Axiome in them, *That none should be condemned till they
 are first Heard.*

Thirdly we are told of *Great summies of money laid out
 in this Country*: For all we have receav'd we are most
 thankfull: But surely it will be no evidence of ingratitude
 to say to whom we owe most, & this must needs be acknow-
 ledg'd to our **KINGS**, who gave liberally themselves and
 permitted Lotteries to be erected for us: We confesse pri-
 vate adventurers added much, and might have enjoyed the
 fruit of it,* *If the first blow to the Colony*, had not taken from them
 all hopes or desires of prosecuting that, which they so
 earnestly begun; But certainly what ever their liberallity
 was, we should have auoided it more then our *Rattle Snakes*,
 if it had inevitably made slaves, our selves, our wives,
 children, and Posterity. Since the Massacre onely private
 Marchants have adventured hither for private gaines, and we
 confesse have supplied us with that, which we could not
 well have wanted, but this we suppose would be no con-
 vincing argument to France, Spaine, or the Low Countries,
 for their subjection to *England* because these severall places

* In the
 Year
 1622
 when they
 were
 but 300
 persons
 left alive
 by the
 Massacre.

have been thus furnish'd by her. If then we owe any thing it is to our KINGs liberallity, care, and protection, and we beseech you give us leave to pay our acknowledgment to them.

Fourthly we are told of *usurping a Government to our selves*. We wish we could transmit our recordes to the view of our accusers; By them it would appeare how little we deserve this imputation. For since the beginning of the Colony we have never innovated nor altered any thing in the maine of the Government. But in case we had done it, what more likely Patrons could we chuse to protect us then those who accuse us? Grant we had banish'd, confin'd, imprison'd, condemn'd, and executed those that refuse to obey the lawes confirm'd by many consummated free Parliaments: would not those pardon and absolve us who have done the same to others that have refused to obey their edicts, whom they in their consciences beleve they ought not to acknowledge to be a Parliament? Yet the truth is, vve have done none of these things, no man here ever suffer'd in his person or estate: Concerning the differences in *England*, our lawes keepe them in better awe then to dare to speake against the Protector of them: 'Tis true indeed, * *Two*, chose rather to leave the Country then to take the Oathes of *Allegiance* and *Supremacy*, and we acknowledg that vve gladly parted vvith them.

*
Passions
Clergy
men.

Having answered these accusations, vve appeale even to their ovvne judgments that produced them vvwhether vve deserve those hatefull names of *Rebells* and *Traitors*: But vve beleive they vvill still use them to us and others because those *Lucky Bugbeares* of *Rebells*, and *Malignants*, have

frighted

righted divers to the desertion of honest causes: Yet being
 as vve suppose in their ovvne consciences) free from these
 imputed crimes, (though very short sighted in such subtile
 matters) vve thinke vve can easely find out the cause of this
 excluding us the society of Nations, vvwhich bring us necessa-
 ries for vvhat our Country produces: And that is the Awa-
 ke of a fevv interested persons, vvwho endeavour to rob us
 all vve sweate and labour for: Therefore on the vvhole
 matter vve Conclude: We are resolv'd to Continue our
 Allegiance to our most Gracious KING, yet as long as his
 gracious favour permits us, vve vvill peaceably (as for-
 merly) trade vvith the *Londoners*, and all other *Nations* in
 amity vvith our Sovereigne: Protect all forraigne Mer-
 chants vvith our utmost force from injury in the rivers:
 Give Letters of Reprisall to any injured vvithin our Capes:
 We vvhaies pray for the happy restauration of our KING, and
 penitence in them, vvwho to the hazard of their soules have
 abused him.

*This is unanimously consented to by the
 Governour, Councill and Burgessees*

Teste

Ro: Huberd Cl: Conf:
 Johan Corker Cl: Dom: Com: